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ABSTRACT

As part of a long-term study of dropout related issues, this serial issue focuses on the topic of extracurricular activities and their availability in 15 of the largest urban districts in New Jersey. Following an opening section reviewing some of the positions taken over the years regarding extracurricular activities and their role in schools, the argument looks at athletic participation and discusses differences in the availability of interscholastic sports programs between the large urban districts and other districts around the state as well as sharp contrasts in student participation. All of the urban districts offered fewer athletic programs and actual numbers of participants was significantly lower in 1990-91 compared to 1988-89. In all districts, male participation in sports is higher than that of females. The lower percentage of sports participation in urban high schools is primarily the result of the lower number of offerings and the smaller number of team levels. Also, there is a lack of opportunities for students to participate in athletics before the high school level. Also covered in the report are other non-athletic offerings, equity issues among athletic and non-athletic funding, and the effect of participation in extracurricular activities on the dropout rate. A closing section discusses recommendations. (JB)

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Student Access to Extracurricular Activities

"What does money buy for children in New Jersey? For high school students in East Orange, where the track team has no field and therefore has to do its running in the hallways of the school, it buys a minimum of exercise but a good deal of pent-up energy and anger. In mostly upper-middle-income Montclair, on the other hand, it buys two recreational fields, four gyms, a dance room, a wrestling room, a weight room with a universal gym, tennis courts, and track, and indoor areas for fencing."

— Jonathan Kozol, Savage Inequalities (1991).

The role of extracurricular activities in K-12 education in New Jersey has received insufficient attention in recent years. An important element of education, extracurriculars provide a beneficial opportunity for young people to interact with a caring adult in a structured setting. Extracurricular activities can be traced to the turn of the century, according to Arthur Powell, senior research associate at the National Association of Independent Schools. In his famous book, **The Shopping Mall High School**, he wrote that schools introduced sports, clubs, music, and dance "to provide things to do" that were appealing even to students with minimal interest in education.

Traditionally, the public's interest has been piqued by extracurricular activities, and community involvement in schools is still greatly enhanced by the spectator aspect of the interscholastic games, concerts, and plays. In a special report on extracurricular activities in the May, 1989, issue of the education magazine **Phi Delta Kappan**, author Anne Lewis, former executive editor of **Education USA**, said, "Let's be frank, the extracurricular life of schools is a drawing card, engaging the public with the schools much more successfully than school board meetings, newsletters, and open houses ever could do."

Extracurriculars are available in abundance in the majority of school districts in New Jersey, but cracks are developing in the structure of traditional high school programs. In generations past, parents, teachers, or other community members viewed these activities as a positive time commitment resulting in less opportunity to engage in pursuits which conflict with educational goals. Such programs were understood to be opportunities for development of social skills and for building attachments to the school community. Extracurriculars provided an incentive to stay in school for average and above average students, as well as for troubled students who needed avenues of success beside the classroom. Now, debating the relevance of extracurriculars in the life of a student has become commonplace, especially when budget cutting is a necessity or tax increases are threatened.

In recent years, the term "cocurricular" has begun to replace "extracurricular" as educators' term of choice in describing these activities. "Cocurricular" implies an inclusive approach of incorporating such activities into the whole process of educating a student. For this study, the term "extracurricular" is used only because it is familiar to most readers.

As part of a long term study on dropout related issues, PARI decided

TABLE 1

Sports Participation: Selected Urban Districts, 1988-89 and 1990-91

			Number of Sports Offered						Participation as % of Enrollment					
			Boys Sports	Boys Sports	Girls Sports	Girls Sports	School Enrollment		Fall	Fall	Winter	Winter	Spring	Spring
County	District	High School	1988-89	1990-91	1988-89	1990-91	1988-89	1990-91	1988-89	1990-91	1988-89	1990-91	1988-89	1990-91
Atlantic	Atlantic City	Atlantic City	10	9	7	9	1896	1813	9.4%	11.1%	7.1%	6.9%	7.3%	8.0%
Camden	Camden	Camden	8	8	5	6	1707	1560	5.8	6.9	6.9	7.8	6.6	7.4
	Camden	Woodrow Wilson	8	7	6	6	1331	1324	12.0	10.3	4.7	5.9	8.5	8.2
Cumberland	Vineland	Vineland	10	11	8	9	2803	2425	10.0	9.7	7.9	7.4	10.3	6.8
Essex	East Orange	Clifford Scott	9	10	7	7	1240	1288	5.2	9.3	7.7	5.5	5.8	5.5
	East Orange	East Orange	8	9	7	8	1798	1857	5.3	4.8	5.2	7.5	4.0	6.2
	Irvington	Frank Morrell	10	10	8	7	2218	2214	8.4	6.2	6.3	6.1	5.8	4.4
	Newark	University	7	7	8	8	513	548	5.5	8.4	13.3	13.1	10.7	12.2
	Newark	Arts	9	8	9	9	548	557	11.9	11.7	15.0	21.2	16.2	16.2
	Newark	East Side	12	13	8	10	1954	2169	7.2	9.5	6.3	6.5	6.1	6.3
	Newark	Malcolm X. Shabazz	10	8	9	8	1177	1033	13.3	12.6	11.5	11.9	12.4	11.4
	Newark	Science	7	7	8	8	459	468	17.6	10.7	27.0	18.4	29.4	18.8
	Newark	Barringer	12	12	7	9	1561	1332	6.7	9.0	7.6	8.0	7.9	10.8
	Newark	West Side	10	10	8	8	1438	1144	5.5	8.2	6.0	10.7	5.7	8.9
Hudson	Union City	Emerson	9	8	4	8	1346	1176	10.3	14.3	7.4	9.9	8.3	7.4
	Union City	Union Hill	9	9	7	8	1086	1157	20.6	16.2	17.8	12.4	14.6	10.8
	Jersey City	Henry Snyder	8	8	7	7	1286	1319	7.0	9.8	9.1	9.0	7.1	6.0
	West New York	Memorial	9	9	8	8	1653	1768	12.2	12.0	9.6	10.1	9.7	9.8
Mercer	Trenton	Trenton Central	11	11	6	7	2139	2624	9.4	4.5	7.7	5.6	5.9	5.7
Middlesex	Perth Amboy	Perth Amboy	10	10	7	8	1564	1526	10.0	9.1	10.2	9.7	9.5	9.6
Passaic	Passaic	Passaic	11	12	8	8	2236	2100	14.4	13.6	10.6	6.7	11.3	7.8
	Paterson	Eastside	11	11	8	8	2401	1931	5.6	7.6	4.9	9.3	6.3	5.5
	Paterson	John F. Kennedy	11	11	8	8	1912	2086	10.0	9.7	9.3	7.7	8.8	7.6
Union	Plainfield	Plainfield	11	9	8	7	1599	1571	9.1	10.4	8.2	8.9	8.3	10.0
	Elizabeth	Elizabeth	12	11	9	7	4209	4161	7.4	7.1	6.6	6.7	4.5	2.5
Average			9.6	9.5	7.4	7.8	1683	1646	9.6%	9.7%	9.4%	9.3%	9.2%	8.6%

SOURCE: *New Jersey State Interscholastic Athletic Association Survey Forms, 1988-89 and 1990-91. Verbal and written communication with athletic directors. New Jersey Department of Education Public School Enrollment Data, September, 1988, and September, 1990. Calculations by PARI.*

NOTE: *Four high schools in Jersey City and two in Newark did not report to NJSIAA in 1988-89 or in 1990-91.*

to examine the role of extracurriculars in 15 of the largest urban districts in New Jersey (all except Atlantic City are among the 30 included in the "special needs" category as outlined in the Quality Education Act of 1990). These are the very districts where dropouts are endemic and high schools often graduate less than 50% of a class. What opportunities are available to these urban students to participate in athletic programs, a chorus, or a debate team? Do they have the same opportunities to participate in extracurriculars as students in other school districts in the Garden State? Do they actually participate?

Public Affairs Research Institute of New Jersey, Inc.

James A. Shissias, *Chairman of the Board of Policy Advisors*

Dave Kehler, *President*

Athletic Participation

In New Jersey high schools, athletics basically means interscholastic sports. Intramural sports are rare at this level, as are community recreational sports programs for teenagers. The interscholastic sports programs in most districts are highly organized and can be extremely competitive. Despite the same basic New Jersey State Interscholastic Athletic Association structure, PARI found a difference in the availability of interscholastic sports programs between the large urban districts and other districts around the Garden State during two non-consecutive years. A sharp contrast in student participation was also noted. In Table 1, 24 high schools from the 15 urban districts are listed with the number of sports available for boys and girls and the percentage of student participation for each athletic season: fall, winter, and spring. Table 2 provides a similar listing for 16 randomly selected high schools from other districts around the state. This second group of comparison schools represents schools in various District Factor Groupings (New Jersey Department of Education's groupings based on seven socioeconomic variables obtained from the U.S. Census, with "A" representing the most disadvantaged districts and "J" the most advantaged). All of the urban districts studied belong to the A or B groups except Plainfield, which is from the C group.

High schools in New Jersey offer a wide range of interscholastic sports programs for students (Note: For the purposes of this study, cheerleading is not considered a sport), but, on average, the schools randomly selected from around the state offered more sports for boys and for girls than did the urban schools. Comparison high schools, even though significantly smaller in enrollment, average two more sports programs for boys and more than two additional sports programs for girls. Not only is the availability of sports programs less in these urban districts, but actual numbers of participants in these programs are significantly lower. Although percentage of participation is

a direct function of enrollment, the variations are so significant between the two groups of high schools that enrollment alone cannot begin to account for the difference. In terms of percentage of student enrollment, the randomly selected schools generally report two to three times the participation of the urban schools in any sport season. The differences become more relevant with an example of a high school of similar enrollment from each group. During the 1990-91 fall season, girls in Camden High School (enrollment, 1560) had the opportunity to participate on either a cross country team or a tennis team, and 29 girls joined the teams that year. In Burlington County's Lenape district, Cherokee High School (1990-91 enrollment, 1541) offered cross country, field hockey, gymnastics, soccer, and tennis for girls. A total of 160 girls participated in these sports in the fall of 1990. At East Orange's Clifford Scott High School (1990-91 enrollment, 1288) in the spring of 1991, 16 boys played baseball, four played tennis, and 16 participated in outdoor track and field. In contrast, at Watchung Hills Regional High School in Somerset County (1990-91 enrollment, 1187), 52 boys played baseball; 15, golf; 47, tennis; and 73 opted for outdoor track and field.

TABLE 3

Average Instances of Sports Participation* Per High School Boys and Girls, 1988-89 and 1990-91

	Urban Districts		Comparison Districts	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
1988-89	285 67%	142 33%	412 61%	264 39%
1990-91	265 65	142 35	420 57	322 43

* Total number of participants representing three athletic seasons. The actual number of students is less due to some participating in more than one season.

SOURCE: *New Jersey State Interscholastic Athletic Association Survey Forms, 1988-89 and 1990-91, and verbal and/or written communication with school administrators. Calculations by PARI.*

Gender Differences

In all high schools, regardless of location, male participation in sports is significally higher than female participation: 5 to 3 in the 16 randomly selected schools in 1988-89, 4 to 3 in those schools in 1990-91, and 2 to 1 in the urban schools for both years studied. Exceptions to this generalization are the three magnet schools in Newark (Arts, Science, and University) where the total number of female participants is very high. The total number of males and females participating is approximately the same in these schools, due primarily to a higher female enrollment. The percentage of sports participation by gender in New Jersey public high schools is similar to that reported in a national publication entitled **The Third Curriculum: Student Activities** published by the National Association of Secondary School Principals. In the other activities cited in that report, such as music, drama, school publications, and language clubs, participation was closer to 2 to 1, female to male. Table 3 demonstrates rather dramatically the male/female differences in interscholastic sports participation and the urban/comparison high school gender variation. This table indicates instances of participation, with some students participating in more than one sport per year. Of the schools examined, the average urban high school has 48% more students than the average comparison

TABLE 2

Sports Participation: Selected Districts, 1988-89 and 1990-91

				Number of Sports Offered						Participation as % of Enrollment					
County	District	High School	DFG*	Boys Sports 1988-89	Boys Sports 1990-91	Girls Sports 1988-89	Girls Sports 1990-91	School Enrollment 1988-89	School Enrollment 1990-91	Fall 1988-89	Fall 1990-91	Winter 1988-89	Winter 1990-91	Spring 1988-89	Spring 1990-91
Middlesex	Old Bridge	Madison Central	F	11	11	9	10	1365	1211	22.4%	21.3%	19.7%	23.4%	17.9%	22.3%
Camden	Collingswood	Collingswood	F	10	10	9	11	803	795	24.8	31.8	18.7	14.7	24.3	22.0
Morris	Morris	Morristown	I	15	15	12	12	1492	1240	20.4	23.6	20.6	22.7	20.9	26.9
Bergen	Bergenfield	Bergenfield	G	11	11	10	11	959	913	21.1	25.1	14.3	14.2	19.6	21.7
Somerset	Bernardsville	Bernards	J	12	12	11	10	610	462	32.0	47.8	21.9	24.5	29.7	39.6
Somerset	Bound Brook	Bound Brook	F	9	8	6	6	676	597	18.2	23.8	12.9	14.9	26.2	22.9
Ocean	Brick	Brick Twp.	D	12	12	10	11	1556	1505	17.9	19.3	11.4	12.6	10.5	10.7
Burlington	Lenape	Cherokee	H	12	12	12	12	1635	1541	22.6	24.5	15.6	16.3	19.9	23.3
Camden	Cherry Hill	Cherry Hill East	I	13	13	12	11	2252	1955	19.4	25.8	10.1	18.7	18.0	26.8
Burlington	Cinnaminson	Cinnaminson	H	11	12	11	11	814	697	34.6	40.2	17.0	26.9	34.8	36.6
Hunterdon	Frenchtown	Del. Val. Reg.	D	8	8	7	7	699	686	29.9	36.3	15.9	12.0	27.9	30.0
Gloucester	Deptford	Deptford	C	11	11	8	9	818	710	13.8	29.2	13.8	21.5	17.8	22.7
Mercer	Hamilton	Hamilton North	F	13	12	8	9	1051	1054	21.7	26.3	16.3	30.6	24.7	30.2
Union	Linden	Linden	C	13	12	10	10	1384	1320	14.5	12.7	14.9	18.3	15.5	14.5
Essex	Montclair	Montclair	I	15	15	10	14	1476	1465	25.1	28.6	15.7	16.0	26.0	23.7
Somerset	Warren	Watchung Hills Regional	I	10	11	9	10	1092	1187	23.1	25.4	13.3	17.1	23.3	25.3
Average				11.6	11.6	9.6	10.2	1168	1084	22.6%	27.6%	15.8%	19.0%	22.3%	25.0%

SOURCE: *New Jersey State Interscholastic Athletic Association Survey Forms, 1988-89 and 1990-91. Verbal communication with athletic directors. New Jersey Department of Education Public School Enrollment Data, September, 1988, and September, 1990. Calculations by PARI.*

**New Jersey Department of Education's District Factor Groupings (DFG) based on seven socioeconomic variables obtained from the 1980 U.S. Census.*

high school. Despite this, the number of instances of participation are significantly less for boys and girls in these urban schools. Female participation in comparison districts increased by 22% between the two years studied. Schools in the urban areas showed no variation in gender participation levels over the two years.

Competition

The lower percentage of sports participation in urban high schools is primarily the result of the lower number of offerings, not only of the sport itself, but, frequently, of the number of team levels. Some schools sponsor freshman, junior varsity, and varsity level teams and accommodate most interested students with little or no cutting. Since a limiting factor in participation is the number of places on a team, competition for a spot on the team in a large high school can be fierce. Elizabeth has fielded championship basketball teams for years, but the student with average basketball skills in Elizabeth has never made the team. Only 55 boys in Elizabeth played basketball, 2% of the boys in that high school, in 1988-89. In Paterson's Eastside High School, 3% played basketball. In contrast, 10% of the boys played basketball in Hunterdon County's Delaware Valley Regional High School. Alternative avenues for average basketball players in a large high school are practically non-existent, and, thus, a significant number of potential participants are simply shut out.

Recognizing that larger high schools have a more competitive environment for some sports, the PARI staff reviewed outdoor track and field for participation levels in order to discount the limiting factor of team size. This is an individual sport with much less limitation on the number of participants, less previous experience required, and less reliance on a student's physical size. As shown in Table 4, student participation is still significantly lower in urban schools than the randomly selected high schools. It appears that, regardless of the level of competition in the sport, some urban students in New Jersey high schools have chosen not to participate even when opportunities are available to them. Exactly why there appears to be a lack of interest is open to speculation and probably varies from student to student and from school to school, but the reasons need to be explored. Lack of facilities may be a factor for this particular sport, but it is not the only answer, as will be discussed later.

TABLE 4

Outdoor Track and Field Participation: Selected High Schools, 1988-89 and 1990-91

County	District	High School	Number of Participants 1988-89 Boys	Girls	Percentage of Enrollment Participating 1988-89	Number of Participants 1990-91 Boys	Girls	Percentage of Enrollment Participating 1990-91
Comparison High Schools								
Middlesex	Old Bridge	Madison Ctl.	54	42	7.0%	60	60	9.9%
Morris	Morris	Morristown	65	22	5.8	54	36	7.3
Burlington	Lenape	Cherokee	76	24	6.1	76	46	7.9
	Cinnaminson	Cinnaminson	60	35	11.7	41	24	9.3
Union	Linden	Linden	36	55	6.6	41	33	5.6
Urban High Schools								
Essex	Newark	East Side	21	15	1.8	28	8	1.6
Hudson	Union City	Union Hill	51	34	7.8	26	35	5.3
	Jersey City	Henry Snyder	20	17	2.9	16	21	2.8
Camden	Camden	Camden	18	17	2.1	22	21	2.8
Union	Elizabeth	Elizabeth	50	30	1.9	58	39	2.3
Passaic	Paterson	Eastside	23	21	1.8	31	14	2.3
Mercer	Trenton	Trenton	39	30	3.2	16	33	1.9

SOURCE: *New Jersey State Interscholastic Athletic Association Survey Forms, 1988-89 and 1990-91. New Jersey Department of Education Public School Enrollment Data, September, 1988, and September, 1990. Calculations by PARI.*

Prehigh School Programs

The success of interscholastic sports programs is dependent, first and foremost, on the students' interest, skill, enthusiasm, discipline, and self-confidence. The structure and demanding schedule required by coaches is a new experience for a student who has never participated in an organized sport. Shooting baskets on the playground, no matter how talented a student may be, is not the same as the discipline of the team experience. By the time most potential participants from around the Garden State reach high school, they know the game well; many have participated on a variety of teams long before 9th grade. After interviews with athletic directors from the urban high schools, the PARI staff noted a frequent thread in their laments - students with little or no background in sports participation.

Intramurals on the elementary level and intermurals in middle or junior high school, along with sports programs sponsored by community organizations, provide the learning phase for most athletic participants. Due to the magnitude, comparison districts' athletic directors had difficulty naming all the recreational activities and sports teams available to students before high school. Not only did conventional programs like Little League, Pop Warner football, and soccer teams abound for students as young as 5 or 6 years, but many students also had access to martial arts, swimming, ballet, gymnastics, skating, or ice hockey. The sheer volume of such information rapidly proved beyond the scope of this study. Collecting information in the urban districts was easier. There are some exemplary urban programs, but they are not always located at every school. Municipal or community programs, when available, frequently operate only in the summer and usually are recreational in nature. Little League and similar team activities for children serve a much smaller percentage of the population and rarely extend

beyond the beginner's level. Some urban school districts have 7th and 8th grade basketball programs, but Plainfield and Elizabeth are the only urban districts in the scope of this study with 7th and 8th grade teams in several sports.

The best age at which to begin competitive sports programs has been a point of discussion for many years. Surveys on a national level have shown that the greatest rates of participation, including all sports, occur at 10 years of age, with a steady decline until age 14, when a sharp decline occurs. This sharp decline is associated with the advent of inter-scholastic competition, which reduces by more than one-half the number of youth who participate in sports. Some experts have speculated that intensive competition at an early age may turn kids away from sports and that younger students may just need recreational activities with more emphasis on fun than competition. Parental pressure at an early age may ultimately result in some suburban youngsters losing interest in early adolescence due to excessive and inappropriate pressure in their introduction to competition.
The converse, for many urban children, is the lack of opportunities to participate in organized sports.

Other Constraints

The amount of time students have to devote to extracurricular activities is a significant factor in participation, especially in urban districts. These students sometimes have family responsibilities which far outweigh those of the average student in other types of communities. Urban personnel told the PARI staff that many students, both girls and boys, must babysit for younger siblings after school. Safety also plays a very large part in the complex urban picture; some parents insist that their children return home immediately after school. Practice periods frequently lasting beyond daylight hours hold ominous implications for parents of boys and, especially, girls.

During interviews with school personnel involved with extracurricular activities, the PARI staff was frequently reminded that the student's cultural background significantly affects the emphasis students and/or parents place on extracurricular participation. Immigrant families are sometimes reluctant to allow their children, particularly daughters, to participate in sports programs as well as after-school recreation programs.

Part-time employment, even full-time for some students, is the most frequently voiced complaint of coaches, athletic directors, principals, and club advisors from all areas. Their perception is that the number of students holding jobs has risen significantly in the last decade. The U.S. Department of Labor claims that youth employment has remained relatively constant in the 1980s, with an urban minority youth less than half as likely to be employed as a suburban youth. There is no reason to find government statistics reliable in this regard. Many students are employed "off the books", and youth have opportunities to be employed in the underground economy. The recent recession, however, may account for the increase in sports participation of youth from the comparison districts studied here during the last two years. Several athletic directors told the PARI staff that students who could not find a job decided to "join the team".

Coaches and Facilities

The Youth Sports Institute at Michigan State University, in a report released in October, 1991, pointed to coaching as a significant factor in desirable benefits of competition, including enhanced mental and physical health, social skills, the ability to cope with winning and losing, and the development of a sound moral code. The report, **An Overview of Youth Sports Programs in the United States**, cautions that potentially detrimental effects of participation in sport are as likely to occur as the beneficial effects. The training of coaches was cited as an important determinant in the outcome. Every district could point to some outstanding coaches, but whether all coaches contribute to a positive environment for students is open to question. NJSIAA officials have expressed some concerns to the PARI staff due to an increasing number of coaches being ousted from games by referees for unsportsmanlike behavior. Twenty-two coaches were disqualified in the fall season and 38 in the winter season of 1991-92. It would appear that goals of winning championships and obtaining college scholarships for top players sometimes can erode the good intentions of sports programs.

In New Jersey, administrative code (N.J.A.C. 6:29-6.3) requires that coaches be certified teachers (if no certified teacher is available, a county certified substitute teacher may coach with permission from the county superintendent). New Jersey's code is one of the most limiting in the nation, so strict that even a parent of a public school student cannot accompany an athlete to a NJSIAA competition without a coach present, even in an individual sport. Despite this stringent code, there is no requirement that the person holding a teacher certificate have experience in coaching athletes or in providing guidance with techniques for safety.

Hiring coaches is a perennial problem in almost all of the urban districts studied. According to estimates from information provided to the PARI staff, football coaches usually have the heaviest work schedule: 200 to 300 hours is an approximate commitment of time, depending on the number of hours spent during pre-season practice sessions. Other coaches generally spend about 150 to 200 hours on the job. Passaic's athletic director was the only one to tell the PARI staff that they had no trouble hiring coaches. Not surprisingly, Passaic pays its coaching staff more than any other urban district studied (Table 5). According to the New Jersey Education Association, the

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TABLE 5

High School Coaching Salaries:
Selected Urban Districts, 1988-89 and 1990-91

County	District	Baseball Head Coach 1988-89	Football Head Coach 1988-89	Tennis Head Coach* 1988-89	Baseball Head Coach 1990-91	Football Head Coach 1990-91	Tennis Head Coach* 1990-91
Atlantic	Atlantic City	$2800	$3600	$2300	$3000	$4000	$2700
Camden	Camden	2736	3331	970	3221	3921	1241
Cumberland	Vineland	2486	4045	(Boys) 1859 (Girls) 1491	2860	4687	(Boys) 2126 (Girls) 1695
Essex	Newark	2756	3196	1202	3141	3644	1362
	East Orange	2943	3842	2017	3208	4800	2199
	Irvington	3379	4914	2352	4100	5430	2718
Hudson	Jersey City	2478	3448	1078	2945	4098	1281
	Union City	1983	3589	1423	2650	3950	1570
	West New York	2300	3150	—	2800	3650	1800
Mercer	Trenton	3749	4846	2431	4450	5000	3230
Middlesex	Perth Amboy	2689	3919	1650	3145	4585	1930
Passaic	Passaic	4093	5716	2340	4917	6866	3890
	Paterson	3450	4900	2250	4200	5950	2700
Union	Elizabeth	2630	4453	1788	3011	5098	2048
	Plainfield	2882	5348	2146	3439	6381	2560
State Average		3115	3955	(Boys) 2251 (Girls) 2240	3723	4629	(Boys) 2754 (Girls) 2727

NOTE: *All salaries listed are actual, or maximum, if salary guides were provided.*
**Salaries listed are the same for boys' tennis coach and the girls' tennis coach, unless otherwise noted.*

SOURCE: ***Extra Pay for Extra Services****, 1988-89 and 1990-91 Editions, NJEA Research; verbal and/or written communication with district administrators.*

state average compensation for a head baseball coach for 1990-91, for example, was $3723; Passaic paid $4917. Head football coaches averaged $4629 statewide in that same year; Passaic paid $6866. In contrast, Jersey City paid $2945 for a head baseball coach and $4098 for a head football coach. This latter district has a considerable problem hiring coaches. In the urban districts, the situation is often particularly acute for coaches of minor sports and assistant coaches for all sports. The result of coaching shortages is understaffed programs or elimination of a sport. This causes a discontinuity in program and loss of student interest. The requirement that coaches be certified teachers contributes to the shortage of coaches, especially in the urban areas.

Comparison districts' coaching salaries for head coaches are not necessarily higher; in fact, some are much lower. But, to ease responsibilities, comparison districts appear to hire considerably more assistant coaches. The pay scale for coaches of minor sports in comparison districts is somewhat higher than in urban districts. Suburban districts do occasionally have to struggle to find coaches, but their top notch facilities, students with sports participation backgrounds, and financial incentives usually combine to entice a certified teacher to accept the post. This new "coach" could simply be the proverbial "warm body" and know nothing about the sport, coaching, or safety measures, but the program will continue.

Playing fields, and even gyms, present a challenge for urban districts. Although the number, proximity, and condition of playing fields and gyms do not seem to affect directly the percentage of student participation, the schools in urban districts often endure conditions that would never be tolerated by other communities around the state. Most suburban high schools have acres of green fields adjacent to the school property or a short distance away. Most urban schools share facilities and frequently use municipal complexes. The three magnet schools in Newark have no playing fields; they also have no gyms. Among the urban districts studied, only Elizabeth and Plainfield claim to have excellent playing field conditions.

Recreational Programs in Urban Schools

The PARI staff investigated the availability of other sports activities for urban youth, in particular those offered on school property. One notable example was the School Based Youth Services Programs (SBYSP) which operate in seven of the 15 urban districts studied. The New Jersey Department of Human Services designed SBYSP to serve as a centralized service delivery system to integrate social service programs within a district and link a network of youth service providers. SBYSP activities are conducted either in school buildings or in close proximity to schools. This is a major dropout prevention initiative which focuses on services that specifically address at-risk factors for dropping out. All SBYSP have an active recreational component which is designed to reduce the stigma attached to seeking social services and to provide a safe place for students to go after school hours and during the summer. Many operate on weekends and holidays, as well.

These programs vary widely from

college field trips to volleyball tournaments. All are creatively designed to accommodate the available space and the needs of the young people being served. Attracting students to these programs has been much easier than solving the problems of working around the rigid, often bureaucratic, structure in school systems. Gym time is prized, and interscholastic sports programs take precedence. On the positive side, an SBYSP administrator told the PARI staff that, as these programs become more accepted in a district, it has become easier to work with school officials in scheduling activities. Of some concern: SBYSP social workers, although qualified in their own field, are neither certified teachers nor school district employees, and, because of administrative code restrictions, student supervision responsibilities have had to be worked out on a school-by-school basis. With the introduction of school programs run through outside agencies, school administrators have had to negotiate new procedures for the good of the children being served. In some cases, this process has had positive outcomes. A popular teacher or a coach hired to assist SBYSP personnel has added new prestige to the activities.

Other Extracurricular Activities

Because the interscholastic sports component of high school extracurricular activities is highly organized and structured under an athletic director, it is easy to determine the level of student participation. The same cannot be said for music, drama, yearbook activities, or class functions. There often appears to be vastly less administrative interest in extracurricular activities apart from sports. Rarely did one person, even a principal, know just how many students were involved. Coaches are hired as a matter of course for sports programs; other extracurriculars are more dependent on the availability, interest, and talents of the staff. In contrast to coaches, adequate monetary compensation for club/activity advisors seems to be more easily eliminated when budget problems occur. However, the comparison high schools studied still manage to offer a wide variety of activities for students. The overriding factor in urban schools appears to be the dedication of a particular teacher, administrator, or participating organization. Newark's Science High School has a nationally acclaimed debate team due to just such a teacher. Reportedly, no other urban high school in New Jersey has a debate team. The Camden district has competitive chess teams on the high school level due to the determination of a few teachers, including a football coach, who see this as a particularly positive activity for urban youth. Choruses or bands which ideally are integrated into a student's class and extracurricular schedule remain elusive for many urban students heavily scheduled into basic skills classes. Dance programs, highly recommended for active adolescents, are an anomaly, an exception being the Trenton Public Schools.

Interdistrict competition and participation in statewide activities, other than athletics, is on a much smaller scale. In general, urban students do not have as many opportunities available to them as do students in comparison districts. A good example is the lack of participation of urban students in the All-State Orchestra and the All-State Chorus, both of which perform annually at the New Jersey Education Association Convention in Atlantic City. Auditions for positions in these groups are highly competitive, and districts and/or parents must pay transportation costs for several rehearsals during the year plus a three day stay in Atlantic City. A noteworthy exception: Newark's student actors from Arts High School took top all around honors in the 1991 New Jersey High School Theater competition as a result of a cooperative effort with the Papermill Playhouse in Millburn. Students in magnet high schools seem to fare better than students in other urban high schools in access to statewide competitions.

Extracurricular activities and their descriptions vary widely from district to district. A yearbook advisor and senior class advisor were the two paid positions that were mentioned most frequently in the districts studied. The ranges of compensation were considerable. According to the New Jersey Education Association, in 1988-89, Paterson paid its yearbook advisor $500 and a senior class advisor $800. During that same school year, Morristown High School's yearbook advisor and senior class advisor both received $2850. Compensations provided by other districts studied fell somewhere between these two examples, with the urban districts usually paying considerably less. The size of the high school, thus the number of students potentially available to participate, bore no relation to the monetary reimbursement offered to club/activity advisors.

Equity Issues

Besides staff compensation, issues of equity between sports and other extracurricular activities flare up with increasing frequency. All types of districts studied appear to be groping with these issues, not just the urban districts. The Board of Education in Cherry Hill recently was confronted with the inequity of providing transportation funding for interscholastic sports playoffs and the chess championship but not for rehearsals and performances for All-State Chorus or All-State Orchestra. This Board of Education is not alone in facing a myriad of equity problems. When parents in a nearby district realized that sports equipment had remained a priority in the district budget, but musical instruments and marching band uniforms were pushed aside, a petition was submitted to that Board of Education on behalf of the music students.

The discrepancy of funding of male teams and female teams has often been an even bigger equity issue. Increasingly, young women have begun to take athletics very seriously and, as a result, have realized that there are typically more school sports opportunities for boys. Female participants in school activities and their parents know that school districts must begin to address these equity problems. Title IX, Office of Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Education 34CFR, Section 106.31(a), requires that no person be denied

benefits of educational programs or activities on the basis of gender. Gym and field time allotted to the girls' teams, the types of equipment and uniforms supplied to the teams, assignment of locker rooms, lack of woman coaches, cheerleaders only for boys' games, evening and weekend playing hours for boys' teams, and marching bands only for football games are just a few of the inequities that have been questioned by girls in schools around the Garden State.

The involvement of special education students in after-school activities often presents distinctive problems requiring creative solutions. District grading policies affecting extracurricular participation are often vague and inflexible for such students. Out-of-district educational placement also can be particularly difficult for talented athletes caught between schools on buses during practice time. Students with physical disabilities present multiple dilemmas, but many staff members live up to the challenge of finding solutions. A wheelchair bound student in the marching band is only one example of how some students, unfortunately not nearly enough, have been accommodated.

Sports participation user fees have not been a major issue in New Jersey, but, if present economic conditions continue, new ways might have to be found to supplement the funding of these activities. The National School Boards Association recently reported that budgetary pressures have been causing more schools to charge students for participation in sports or other extracurricular activities. User fees in some states have ranged from $21 to $600 per student per sport; sometimes a limit is imposed on how much a family can be charged. Fees are waived for students eligible for free lunches. The New Jersey Department of Education has taken the position that such fees are illegal based on the constitutional obligation of boards of education to provide a thorough and efficient system of free public schools. In New Jersey, districts under financial stress have tended to look to other means, such as "booster clubs", for supporting activities. Bernards Township considered charging a sports fee last year but dropped the idea because of public opposition.

Extracurriculars and Dropouts

Do extracurricular activities actually contribute to keeping students in school? Researchers have known for a long time that these activities attract the bright, high performing students. The Office of Educational Research and Improvement in the U.S. Department of Education issued a bulletin in September, 1986, in which students were ranked on four related performance measures (course credits, hours of homework, test scores, and grade average) and extracurricular involvement was assessed. The more involved students were, the higher they ranked on the performance measures. The report stated that participation in extracurriculars does not guarantee improved academic performance, but it is clear that such activities attract many bright, goal-oriented students. It would appear that Newark's magnet schools are a good example of this phenomenon. Their participation levels in sports and other activities compare to, and often exceed, some of the most highly ranked schools around the state.

The National Federation of State High School Associations recently issued a briefing paper for members entitled "The Case for High School Activities" which begins with the statement, "There is a secret in America's high schools that need not be hidden any longer. The secret is that activities are not just a way to have fun or be with friends, they are a valuable educational tool." The paper lists the following benefits:

"**Activities support the Academic Mission of Schools**. They are not a diversion but rather an extension of a good educational program.

"**Activities are Inherently Educational**. Through participation in activities programs, students learn self-discipline, build self-confidence and develop skills to handle competitive situations. These are qualities the public expects schools to produce in students so that they become responsible adults and productive citizens.

"**Activities Foster Success in Later Life**. Participation in high school activities is often a predictor of later success - in college, a career and becoming a contributing member of society."

These conclusions were based on a national survey of principals and 7000 high school students in all 50 states.

Whether participation actually keeps students from dropping out is less apparent. Available research studies detailing the relationship of extracurricular activities to student success do not provide a definitive answer. Only one study actually analyzes the relationship of such activities to dropout rates. Issued in 1989 by The Women's Sports Foundation in cooperation with the Center for the Study of Sport in Society at Northeastern University and entitled **Minorities in Sports**, this national study analyzed student profiles of 1980 high school sophomores and reported, "Sport was a social resource for many minorities. Compared to nonathletes, athletes were more apt to see themselves as popular and to be more involved with community and other extracurricular activities. These benefits accrued to girls and boys, and to black, Hispanic, and white athletes alike." In urban schools, athletic participation exerted no "holding effect". "The absence of any significant holding effect in urban schools may be due to the fact that the social and personal rewards of sport could not counteract the problems of city schools and the urban environment." Although this study provides some much needed insights into the role of athletics in the lives of minority students, it offers no help in analyzing whether early involvement in the school community through extracurriculars could be instrumental in keeping urban students in school.

In two previous reports on dropouts, PARI concluded that, in the urban districts studied, the number of dropouts is often as high as 50%. From this present study, it is evident that these same districts have the least number of activities available to their students. New Jersey data available on extracurriculars is not correlated in any way to student profiles, so no direct relationship can be established between participation and dropping out. However, leading dropout experts have expressed

opinions on this subject, with many of them concluding that extracurricular participation draws students more effectively into the school community.

Dr. Robert Johnson, Director of Adolescent Medicine in the Department of Pediatrics, University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey, has been an outspoken advocate for the interests of minority students in New Jersey. He sees a very positive role for competition in school activities that are well designed and supervised. He expressed concern to the PARI staff that the importance of extracurricular activities, especially athletics, is being downplayed due to budget problems. These programs provide exercise, and, thus, weight control, social interaction, and close contact with an adult role model. In urban districts, particularly, he commented, extracurriculars may be the only opportunity students have to work closely with an adult in a structured setting. He laments, however, that too much emphasis on competition can lead to an abuse of substances, such as anabolic steroids.

Noted dropout expert Professor Gary Natriello of Columbia University's Teachers College said, "Students begin 'dropping out' long before they physically stop attending school. If they are not drawn into the school community long before high school, they will probably not participate if they even make it to high school. At an early age, they need a broad range of activities that are fun and supervised by caring adults."

The **Phi Delta Kappan** report, mentioned previously, attempts to summarize the relevance of extracurriculars. Dr. Lauren Resnick, Director of the Learning Research and Development Center, University of Pittsburgh, stated, "In school, young people work individually. Group activities may occur, but students ultimately are judged on what they can do by themselves. By contrast, a great deal of activity outside of school is shared. Schoolwork places a premium on activities involving pure thought, activities that can be done without tools. Outside of school, most mental activities are intimately involved with tools on one kind or another." The report goes on to point out that "whereas the cocurriculum was once valued primarily for its ability to enhance self-esteem and student aspirations, now its intrinsic worth is becoming more a matter of economics: young people who have experience solving real problems in real settings have better chances of finding employment. This is a complex issue that requires a new examination of the contributions of extracurricular activities to the aims of schooling."

Recommendations

As QEA funding discussions continue in Trenton and prospects for new solutions to state aid for education dwindles, district boards of education need to understand and evaluate the extracurricular programs being offered to their students. Before financial concerns erode the present structure, a complete assessment is required. Boards of education in New Jersey must review the scope of their extracurricular activities, grading policies for extracurricular participation, and the level of financial support adequate to sustain a broad range of activities. To begin the evaluation process, administrators must collect all the necessary information from local schools to document the district's offerings. NJSIAA is in an ideal position to provide assistance in such an undertaking. PARI plans to make these reports available to districts to provide a basis for discussion. A breakout of all related costs for the activity programs, including salaries, supplies, insurance, and maintenance of buildings and grounds, must be developed. Such a process will highlight areas of concern and allow boards of education to analyze the full picture. All activities are certainly not equal in cost but may be equal in importance to certain groups of students in a diverse student body. This is not to suggest that a football team should be equated to a chess team, because the football program and related activities most likely involve significantly more student participants. However, if the costs of an interscholastic sport with the accompanying marching band and cheerleaders prohibits a district from offering interested students a chance to play chess, then a serious discussion needs to follow. If some programs have been cancelled in order to continue to fund the larger ticket items, then alternative means of funding, such as booster clubs or team adoption by a service organization, should be addressed to supplement existing programs.

School Based Youth Service Programs need to be expanded to all schools in all of the urban districts. Close cooperation with SBYSP personnel, health and physical education department personnel, guidance counselors, and coaches could provide a comprehensive approach to servicing the recreation needs of students in these districts.

Equity issues must be openly discussed. Title IX does not say that sports programs for girls and boys must be the same, but it does say that the benefits of activities provided by educational systems cannot be denied on the basis of gender. Girls and boys and their parents should be allowed to comment on the adequacy of the currently available activities. Equity also demands that the needs of at-risk students be addressed. Guidance counselors and representatives from child study teams should seek opinions from their charges and suggest the best methods of incorporating these students into available programs. The interests of all students must be considered. In culturally diverse school districts, that may mean that dance, chess, or soccer be given some priority.

The New Jersey Board of Education and the Commissioner of Education need to reopen a discussion of the strict guidelines for teacher certified personnel in the supervision of students in school settings. Alternative approaches to the requirement of teacher certification for all coaches need to be seriously discussed. The Institute for the Study of Youth Sports recommendation that adults working with youth sports programs could acquire coaching education through an alternative certification process might be worth considering to ease an apparent shortage of coaches. With

the expansion of the highly successful SBYSP activities, a need also has developed to give thoughtful consideration to the status of qualified, but not teacher certified, personnel working under cooperative school arrangements. Increased flexibility in the use of qualified personnel, such as social workers, must be reviewed. Providing restraints so tight that even a world-class athlete could not coach a high school team or a social worker running a badly needed SBYSP program could not supervise a school field trip will curtail the flexibility of many activity programs, deprive some students of broader adult contacts and recreation, and limit the full use of school facilities.

Lengthening the school day and the school year, a suggestion heard more frequently in the last few years, might provide extra time for urban students in elementary and high schools to enjoy a fuller range of activities. The Quality Education Commission, appointed by Governor Jim Florio early last year, reported in January, 1992, "Local school districts, especially those that serve at-risk and disadvantaged students, should develop phased, flexible plans to extend the length of the academic school day and year to provide more time and greater scheduling flexibility for new and existing educational programs and programs that supplement regular instruction." Unfortunately, this statement has been widely misinterpreted to imply a rigid, year-round, all-day schedule. Rather, it should open the door to discussions of creative uses of community schools for providing alternative services, academic, recreational, and social, for our underserved urban students through cooperation of state, community, and district programs.

Ongoing consideration of what should be the proper arrangement for funding local school districts should include recognition of the value of extracurricular activities. Equity considerations apply to extracurriculars, too. In making assessments of the capital needs of the New Jersey school districts, it is important to recognize, where they exist, deficiencies in facilities for extracurricular activities.

— ***Joan M. Ponessa***

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